

# Writing for publication in *Wounds UK*

## KEY WORDS

- » Journals
- » Publishing
- » Writing

**W***ounds UK* is looking for tissue viability nurses and allied professionals to write for publication in the journal. We want to hear from nurses, lecturers and other practitioners working in multi-professional teams, who are willing to write about their clinical work in wound prevention and management. The following steps can help you decide whether or not to write an article about your practice for *Wounds UK*.

### STEP 1: WHAT CAN YOU WRITE ABOUT?

Begin by reading a copy of *Wounds UK*. The journal is a quarterly, peer-reviewed publication that aims to provide cutting-edge articles and information on wound healing/management to all professionals working in wound care. The type of articles published include:

#### *Review articles*

This type of article looks at a particular topic, such as the dietary needs of patients with pressure ulcers, or stages in the development of wound healing, for instance. Review articles consider some of the key papers that have been published on the topic and come up with a concise summary of the best available advice, research and data to help nurses and other clinical practitioners who are interested in a particular aspect of wound care management.

#### *Research/Audit*

Practitioners who have completed small research or audit projects for their academic courses may wish to share their findings with a wider audience. Research articles are very welcome on a range of topics related to wound healing, although writing a research article can initially seem quite daunting. However, using a clear structure and following the stages of the research process can help make this much easier. A less daunting approach is to consider reporting on the results of a local clinical wound audit. This can involve writing about why and how the wound audit was conducted, highlighting the key findings and raising a number of recommendations or implications for clinical practice. Good research/audit reports often involve

some discussion of the findings and the process of audit. It should be remembered that in some cases, readers are interested in the methods used to conduct the research/audit as much as the findings or results. Before writing a research paper, consent must be sought from a recognised research ethics committee.

#### *Practice development*

Practice development is sometimes closely aligned to audit, but is more generic. An example of practice development in wound care could include the implementation of a clinical pathway for assessing wounds, for example, by photographic imagery, taking photographs of wounds at various stages of healing. It could also involve hand-washing techniques and/or a prevention of cross-infection protocol that has been developed in a specific unit. In this case, a clinical pathway may be seen as an outline of the usual patterns of care for patients with wound management problems. It could also involve teaching/training caregivers about dressing techniques.

#### *Case reports*

Case reports involve the sharing of clinical practice related to a particular patient(s). These are, by definition, more intimate and focused, often on a specific patient or patient group who presented with some challenging issues that required a lot of care and effort from the multi-professional team. Written retrospectively, case reports allow for more detail and often involve more than one group of practitioners. This type of article can be interesting and valuable, and is often about sharing success when a complex case has been managed effectively. It can be written by one person on behalf of others or it can be a shared activity. The latter can be slightly more challenging!

### STEP 2: WHO IS THE TARGET AUDIENCE?

*Wounds UK* is aimed at a wide range of practitioners, not just nurses. Nurses often play a key role in wound management, but others, such as physiotherapists, dietitians and pharmacists,

make a significant contribution to wound healing, assessment and evaluation, prevention and treatment. All practitioners involved in wound management find articles on clinical practice useful as a means of improving their own care, as well as improving the quality of wound management and hence patient wellbeing. Most practitioners have an interest in finding out and comparing how well they are doing in relation to others, as well as becoming more up-to-date in effective wound management.

There is always room for improvement in relation to wound care, with new dressing products coming out, dressing techniques being modified to suit individual cases, and individual patient management being made complex by cultural and social influences. Sharing good practice builds competence and gives practitioners a way of contributing to the knowledge base that nursing needs. When considering the target audience, it is also useful to consider the academic level of the paper.

### STEP 3: IDENTIFYING THE PURPOSE OF THE INTENDED PAPER

Before one starts writing, the content of the paper or the take-home message of the paper should be considered. Does it have a take-home message? Does it need one? Having a clear point to make helps to focus and structure the article. If your review or case report indicates there is a need for nurses to be more diligent in their wound assessment or more focused in their measurement of wound healing, then this should be prominent in the introduction and conclusion. In the conclusion, the paper should be summarised in terms of whether it has successfully informed readers of the contribution the article makes to the knowledge base or ongoing debate.

### STEP 4: FORMATTING IDEAS

Structure is everything! Before beginning to write, time should be used preparing a clear writing plan. The author should work out what paragraphs are required and what each will say and how. Working out a clear and concise title helps provide focus; an abstract/summary works in a similar way to give the reader an overview of what to expect. Paragraphs act as signposts, indicating to the reader your thoughts and ideas. The use of illustrations can be valuable, but these should be checked with the editor in advance as they take up space on the page and may require permission. Reporting on

practice development involves writing in a very disciplined way, articulating each of the stages of development, similar to highlighting a series of events. It is often useful to begin by explaining why the project was started in the first place, what steps were followed, who was involved and what challenges and problems were encountered. The latter is particularly useful to help those who may be thinking of following in your footsteps. Well-structured journal articles maximise readability and stimulate the reader's interest. Writing a review of a particular wound product requires skill, but can be very satisfying.

### STEP 5: PERMISSIONS

Before submitting the article, the author must warrant that the manuscript is their original work, has not been published before and is not being considered for publication by another publisher. All necessary permissions for the reproduction of copyrighted works (e.g. photographs, figures) not owned by the author must have been obtained. The author must confirm that the manuscript contains no unlawful statements and does not infringe any rights of others. The onus is on the author to have obtained all necessary permissions for publication from employers, patients, regulatory bodies and all other relevant third parties prior to submission.

### CONCLUSION

A good conclusion summarises the key points and reiterates the take-home message of the paper. Many practitioners have some very interesting things to say, but need the confidence and support to say it. Discussing the proposal in advance with the editor is an excellent way of receiving encouragement and getting the green light to go ahead and put pen to paper — that was the take-home message of this article, by the way, in case that was not obvious!

Having work published can also ensure high standards of care for patients, through the sharing of clinical experiences. In particular, when there is good practice to share, the author contributes to the wider body of wound care knowledge. To reiterate what has been said earlier, all necessary permissions are needed and any conflicts of interest declared, financial or otherwise, in the interests of transparency. And do read the instructions for authors, which are very detailed and essential reading if you are thinking of publishing. 